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THE

Vindication

OF THE

CHARACTER

OF

Prieſt-Craft.

By *EDMUND HICKERINGILL*,
Rector of *All-Saints* in *Colcheſter*.

LONDON,
Printed; and are to be Sold by *B. Bragge*
at the *Blue-Ball* in *Ave-Mary-Lane*.

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THE VINDICATION OF THE CHARACTER OF Prieſt-Craft.

THAT any *wiſe* or *honeſt* Prieſt (either of *Low* or *High-Church*) ſhould be *pettiſhly concern'd* at my *Characters of Prieſt-craft*, is as unaccountable, as that any *wiſe* or *honeſt* Man of the Neighbourhood ſhould think himſelf *affronted*, when he that's rob'd *ſkreams* out, *Stop Thief, Stop Thief*, whether the Thief robs upon the Roads on Earth, or Heavenwards. But it is a ſuperlative Injuſtice to *make an outcry* againſt the the poor Man that is rob'd, and at the ſame time abet the Robbers; and not only let them go *ſcot-free*, but pay them and applaud them, honour and kneel to them, and beg of them to *pray for you*, and to give you *their Bleſſing*; ſilly Bigots! *be gull'd for ever*—— who ſhould pity you?

They *(only)* make all Religion to be a Cheat, and meer Prieſt-craft, or, at leaſt, *all their own Religion* to be *nothing but Prieſt-craft*, that are in the leaſt concern'd when *Prieſt-craft* is pourtray'd in its own genuine, bloaty and bloody Colours and Features: what harm to true Religion the while?

Thus superstitious *Michah* cry'd out, *Ye have taken away my Gods, which I made, and the Priest, and go your ways,* (Judg. 18. 24.) *and what have I more?* that is, You have left me no Religion at all. Poor and undone Bigot! And all this noise and outcry was but (*ver.* 17.) about a Graven Image, and the Ephod, and the Teraphim, and the Molten Image, a hodge-podge of Jewish and Heathen Religion, the Inventions of a silly Levite.

What a noise is here? and *for what*? only for exposing the Craft by which some Levites get their Wealth, and the Priests best Market-Day in all the Week.

And yet I have *Christ* and his Apostles Warrant to vouch me, and all true Christians, against the superstitious Observation of a *Saturday* or a *Seventh-Day*, or *Sabbath-Day*, or *Seventh-Year*, or *Sabbathical-Year*, though Almighty God hallowed them; and who dare prophane what God has hallowed in the Fourth-Commandment, without an express Command (as ye have against the *Saturday Sabbatharians*) in the New-Testament.

I have read all that *Modern Orthodox Men* have writ for the change of the *Seventh-Day* to a *First-Day-Sabbath*, and I never met with one of them that either showed Logick or Divinity, Sense or Consequence for the Maggot: The Magistrate (as first the Emperor *Constantine*) has done it by Statute-Law in *England*, and done it well; making *every Sunday* an Holy-Day, and also St. *Mark*, St. *Luke*, St. *Philip*, &c.

In obedience whereunto, and the *Fifth Commandment*, we ought to keep those said Holy-Days; but to keep the First Day of the Week by virtue of the *Fourth Commandment*, which hallows the Seventh-Day, (and for a good reason too, because God left Work in the Creation then) is *Nonsense and Contradiction too.* But *Christ* rose on the First Day, therefore ——

Therefore? What? what follows? a making void the *Fourth Commandment*; and the reason of it, to flutter with our own Traditions and Inventions?

We may as rationally argue —— *Christ* died on *Friday* —— and by his Death we have Life —— Therefore ——

Christ perfected the Work of our Redemption, went to prepare a place for us in Heaven, or else we should never come there, nor have had the Comforter, except he had gone away, and all upon a *Thursday* —— Therefore —— Therefore what?

make

make the *Thursday* a Sabbath. Excellent Logicians, and wore Divines!

Christians broke Bread, went to Sacraments, Prayers, Sermons upon the First Day of the Week; Therefore

Christians broke Bread, went to Church, or the Temple, every Day in the Week, *Acts* 2. 46. Therefore ——

Therefore you are a pack of nonsensical Bigots, to be nuzled so easily by *Priest-craft*, in pretending a *Charter from Heaven* for their *Market-Day*, to vend their Wares.

The Parliament have been so devout, as to sanctify not only the First Day of every Week, but many a good Holy-Day for Divine-Service; and it was piously done, and their Duty.

Ay, but some Priests (especially those that live on Alms and Charity) think that is *not Charter enough* for their Market-Day: It is not the first time that Holy Scripture has been produced as a Witness to vouch a Lye of the Priest's making, especially when there is Money in the case, and a happy occasion to vend the Wares of the Hirelings —— as our Blessed Saviour and the Apostle calls them —— Oh! proud Priests! Are you asham'd of the Name by which our Blessed Saviour has Christen'd you? Hirelings.

Labourers then you are, and the World wants your Labours, and you want their Money, for you cannot live on Air. And Therefore every Church is the *Old Exchange*, Spiritual things in exchange for Carnal things, Heaven for Earth, *Quid pro Quo*, and a blessed Exchange it is, and far more necessary than that at *Cornhil*, where many a Cheat is put upon silly Tradesmen by Stock-Jobbers and Brokers; whereas at Church, *The Labourer* is very worthy of his *Hire*.

But if we must needs be Jew-like in the proportion of Time for ever, that God once proportion'd to the Jewish Oeconomy, we must with equal Devotion, keep as many Feast-Days or Holy-Days, as did the *Jews*, in Feast of Passover, Trumpets, and Tabernacles, besides their *Saturday* or weekly Sabbath; and also we must take leave to play one Year in Seven, and neither Plow, nor Sow, nor Labour; which would be good news for School-Boys; for is there any Conscience that they should Work, and the Plow-Man Play? but the poor School-Master must starve; for they seldom store their Houses like a Garison, with a Year's

Pro—

Provision before-hand. The poor School-Master will then have nothing to do but to Play, or Pray with his Family, and Say Grace, without one bit of Victuals, for Eleven of the Twelve Months I will undertake.

So that as I said before, in the First Part of *Priest-craft*, page 17. These three, *Sabbathising*, *Family-Duties*, and *Saying-Grace*, are all good things, but not so patent in Holy Scriptures (say some) as is commonly pretended; neither by *Christ* or his Apostle's Precept or Practise.

Oh but (say some) is there not a plain Text for *Christ*'s praying with his Family (his Disciples) *Luke* 9. 18. *And it came to pass, as he was alone Praying, his Disciples were with him*, and he asked them, *whom say the People that I am?*

This is an Objection of as downright weight against my Books, or Assertions, as ever was made; that is, in plain *English*, nothing to the purpose. For if he pray'd with his Family, he could not be said to Pray *alone*; and if he pray'd *alone*, how is it possible that *his Disciples were with him?*

All that can be infer'd, is, That *Christ* (as he used to do) prayed alone; and when Prayers were done, in came his Disciples to be Catechised, or Examin'd, and to tell him what the People said of him.

Not that he needed their Instruction or Information in the matter (for by his Godhead he understood what every Body in the whole World thought or said of him, or any body else) but, thereby to take an occasion to take from them their License of Preaching him up to the people, to be the Christ, or expected Messias, the time for it being not yet fully come. Christ Pray'd continually (in his Spirit) no doubt, and Preach'd continually, that is, on all occasions; and did both together too; *Jo.* 17. 1. These things spake *Jesus*, and lift up his Eyes to Heaven (in his Prayer (after Sermon) or rather his Prayer *there* was a Sermon; *The hour is come* —— *ver.* 1. and so all on, *in that whole* 17 *Chapter*, his Prayer was rather a Sermon —— for he needed not to tell Almighty God that *his Hour was come*, or that God *had given him power over all Flesh*, ver. 2. and so on —— but he Pray'd in those Terms, for the Sake or Instruction of those that heard him, *ver.* 6. *I have declared thy Name unto the Men which thou gavest me.*

He said not this, to tell God what he had done, but for the Instruction

ſtruction of thoſe that heard that Prayer, which was a Sermon and a Prayer too.

But did not *Cornelius* (Acts 10. 2.) *Fear God with all his houſe, and gave much Alms, and prayed to God always?* I anſwer, Yes, I hope ſo: *Cornelius* was of my Trade, a Captain or Centurion: This proves that he *prayed* with his Soldiers, *upon the Main-Guard*, as much as praying with his Family, for the Text ſays, *He prayed to God always.* But does not the Apoſtle enjoin Chriſtian Families, *Col.* 3. 16. To let the Word of *Chriſt* dwell in them richly, and to *teach and admoniſh one another* in Pſalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs?

I anſwer, Yes; but what's this to praying with ones Family? this is only a Command as well as a Licenſe, to Preach in Proſe or Verſe; in the Reading Pſalms, or in Rhyme, with *Hopkins* and *Sternhold*, or the more modern *Pſalm-Poets*.

But, ſay ſome to me, you blaſpheme when you ſay (Second Part of *Prieſt-craft*, pag. 48.) *The more Fool the more Faith; and the more Fool, the more Bigot and Prieſtridden; and the more Fool, the more Zealot.*

I anſwer, That miſreciting, or falſe reciting my words, proves that they cannot anſwer them, but by Lies or Falſe Recitals; my words intrench not the leaſt againſt a rational and well-grounded Faith, but a nonſenſical and groundleſs or irrational Faith: My Words explain themſelves, if Cavillers had truly recited them, namely, *The more Fool, the more Faith or Credulity.* So that I condemn only that credulity or aptneſs to believe, and know not why nor wherefore; which none can do, or will do, but a Fool.

But, ſay ſome, Do you not abuſe the Holy Scriptures, when you make them to be Pretenders to Infallibility.

I anſwer, No certainly, It is an Honour to pretend to Infallibility, if the Pretence be well grounded; which, I ſay, I admit, ſo ſoon as it is agreed which Chapter and Verſe is God's Word, and which not, and why? and alſo, that the meaning and Interpretation thereof be adjuſted. And he that ſays he does believe more tells a Lye, becauſe he does believe, and knows not why; except by the *Popiſh Implicit Faith*, the Aſylum of [illegible], the refuge of Folly, the Sanctuary of a Coxcomb, and the [illegible] Engine that ever *Prieſt-craft* invented, to *Blind* [illegible]

Thus

Laiety, and then lead them by the Nose, and laugh at the *April Fools*: For (as I said before) *Page* 2. *Part* I. *The Priests of all Sects and Religions, (true or false, good or bad, it's all one for that too) have but one Note, even the same with the Hypocritical Jewish Priests; that cry'd, The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord are these; or —— The Church —— The Church ——*

There is no difference in the Note, for cry, —— The Church, the Church —— the good, the bad, the true, the Impostors, all only —— The Church, the Church ——

If rational Men are oblig'd to believe the first cry (they hear) of the Church, the Church —— it is meer chance (and consequently little worth) that made them *Christians*, and not *Druides*, *Heathens*, *Jews*, or *Mahometans*.

If rational Men only laugh at the Impudence of *Priest-craft*, when they are angry that wise Men do not believe *the first cry* or note, of —— The *Church*, the *Church* —— knowing it to be the true Church, *only because* the Priests (to get Disciples and Money, and domineering Power over them) *tells them so*; do you blame and rail at those rational Men?

If Men be oblig'd never to open their Eyes, or make use of them, but always keep them shut, and be led about by a Dog and a Bell, as good it were for them to be born Blind.

But what ungrateful Wretches are all those, that instead of opening and making use of the Eyes of their Understanding, do not only (deluded by *Priest-craft*) keep them shut, but rail (as they do at me) for biding them look about them, and be no longer gull'd or Priest-ridden.

For that is all the thanks I have got hitherto, for my great pains. —— One threatens to call to the Bishop's Coach to help them (though it can do me no more harm than mine own Coach) another calls to the Bumbailiffs, the Jaylors, Doctor's Commons, and the Hangman (having already bespoke a Halter for me) and what all this for and which Chapter and which is agreed as soon as it is agreed.

Only for telling them that there are *Ecclesiastical Pick-Pockets* abroad in the World; good People, look to your Watches, and *Watch your Pockets*; others say I have done all things well, in endeavouring to make the *Dumb to speak*, the *Deaf to hear*, and the *Blind to see*; but only here's the Fault of all, namely, that the Character of Priest-craft was drawn by a Hand that did not know that Monk, that Rebel.

To

To which I only say, in *short*, but for a *full* Answer, that if it had not been for such Rebels, neither *the Royal Family*, nor what they call *the Church* — the *Church*, (or what some Men value above all) *the Fat Bishopricks and Livings* had never been restor'd.

Well, it shall be a warning to me, if ever I do the like again, to make them so Rich, Proud and Ungrateful, as to them call me Rebel a Second Time. And to shew what a Champion I am, and a *Man of Arms*, the next *Essay* and *Office* that I make against Priest-craft shall be to *Disarm* it for ever; I'll take their Weapons, the *Sting* from their Tails of the *Wasps*; I'll *Guard* them from doing Mischief, and Plaguing the World, with sending them to the Devil by *Excommunication* (and this I can do if I list, by Scripture and the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of *England*). And when the Devil is so civil that he will not take Men, for *their* pleasure, then they use to make the Magistrate (as much as in them lies) to be the *Devil's Surrogate*, and do that, with the help of the Jaylor and the Hangman, which the Devil scorns to do at their bidding, namely, in the Writ *de Excommunicato capiendo*.

Ay, there's the Weapon, there's the *Nonsuch*, and an *infallible* Act of *Parliament* to vouch it, says others, and will you take that *Nonsuch* from them, and Rob *Doctors Commons* of their best Artillery, without which they would be as *harmless as Doves*, though any of them should happen to be *bitingly wise as Serpents*.

God, Christ, the Holy Scriptures, and the Holy Apostles never gave them, and the Jaylors, this Terrible Weapon that bereaves Men of their *Liberty and Estates*; and in times of Popery, bereft them of Life also, and will you take this *necessary Tool* from them (*say others to me*) which was *given* by an Act of Parliament, and which *cannot be taken from them* without an Act of Parliament. But, I say, *Priestcraft* has cheated the silly World abominably to this Day in this very particular.

I *can* (but I *will not*, except it be extorted from me) to the bigotted World that *good Service*, as to prove from Holy Writ, Reason and Law, and Thirty Nine Articles, that *Excommunication* was never Legal nor Apostolical, but when there could be no *Clavis erranti*, namely, when *Infallibility*, and the Gift of *discerning of Spirits* (that *Gift of the Holy Ghost*, with which the *Gift of Tongues*,

ply'd by an Ecclesiastical *Quid pro Quo*, by the Popes erecting *Universities*) and the *Gift of Miracles* (supply'd by an Ecclesiastical *Quid pro Quo*, a Legend of lying Popish Miracles, called *Piæ Fraudes*, or Godly Cheats, or Priestcraft) whose Excommunications (I can convince the unwilling Bigots) are but what our Famous Queen *Elizabeth*, when Excommunicated by Pope *Sergius*, called them) the *Bopeep Crakfarts*.

And I can, without the farther *Aid of Parliaments*, disarm *Priestcraft* of their *dead-doing Tool*, the Writ *De Excommunicato Capiendo*: And all this I can do by Holy Writ, Acts of Parliament now in force, the Thirty Nine Articles, and right Reason, but, I say, I am not yet so *very kind* to silly *bigotted Sots*, but *now* conclude with a Repetition of part of a former Sermon of mine,

Si mundus vult decipi decipiatur.

If People have a fancy gull'd to be,
Gull'd let them be hereafter (still) for me.

For *Priestcraft* is but a new Name for *Antichrist*, they being one and the same thing, at least, like *Hippocrates*'s Twins; they are as like as ever they can look, ἀδελφοι, Brats of the same Womb, and begot by the same Father, *the Father of Lies*; these Twins are *born* and *bred*, *live* and *die* together.

But that I will not *Glut* the World, nor *crowd* the *Advertisements*, I can *now* Publish (what will *ruine* Priest-craft *for ever* in the Christian World) a Book called

Antichrist Defeated: or, *Priest-craft Disarm'd*.

For *Priest-craft* is so far from being a *support to Government*, that, like the *Jesuits* and the *Jesuits*, it proclaims *endless Wars to all Governments* that dare refuse to be Priestridden.

Witness the *sad Face of Europe* at this Day: Behold the Scars and the Wounds, if you can with dry Eyes: Behold the Devil is come down (having great Wrath) in the shape of *Antichrist* or *Priest-*

Priestcraft to plague Mankind; who might all live happily, if the Devil and the Jesuits would let them alone.

But I will be reconciled to *Priestcraft*, if you can show me any one Plot or Roguery, bloody Wars and Massacres in any Kingdom, or in any Reign in *England*, *Scotland*, *France*, or *Ireland*, or any part of *Europe*, but the Priests had a great hand in it; the Priests and the Devil: and yet some would make us believe, that *Priestcraft* is a support to Government: They may say as honestly and truly, That the *Devil* is a support to Government. I do not say tho' but Mankind might live at peace, if they will be content to be hoodwink'd, blindfolded, led by the Nose, and Priest-ridden, and Spur-gall'd. But that Slavery is worse than Death to any Man of Sense, or Honour, or Honesty.

No Government can be secure from Jesuits and Priest-craft, except they be content to be Priestridden-Slaves, and do the Priests Drudgery, in Jayling and Burning, as they order and direct, except *Priestcraft* be disarm'd of their *brutum fulmen* of Excommunication, which I can do, by Scripture, the Thirty Nine Articles, and Statute-Law, when I list.

Have all the angry Priests in *England* so *little Grace* as not to say Grace and thank me, for my *great Pains* in exposing the *Cheats* that impudently hide themselves under (and consequently blemish) their *Holy Profession*? or so *little Wit*, *Learning*, and *true Religion*, as to answer my *Characters of Priestcraft* no other way but with false Recitals and Misrepresentations, Lies, Ribaldry, and Buffoonry.

Which notwithstanding they have more *Modesty* or *Cowardice* than to Justify; *not daring* to publish their *Names* to their senseless Libels: They *shoot* in the *dark*, and *skreen* themselves from discovery (like *Faux*) with a *Dark-Lanthorn*.

But I cannot but smile when they recommend me to be chastis'd by *Doctors-Commons*, where some *nest* themselves, like *Wasps*, only to *buz* about and *Sting*. And I *alone* am able to take the *Sting out of their Tails* and make *Drones* of them; and they cannot be so ignorant, as not to know it; ever since I writ the *Test*, or *Tryal of the Goodness or Value of Spiritual Courts*, published above Twenty Years ago; *Rome was not built* (nor shall be destroyed) *in one Day*. God's time is the best time.

No wonder that they *kick* and sprawl, and struggle for Life;

a very *Snake* (when assail'd) will *wriggle*, and *hiss*, and *spit its Venom*.

Idolatry or Worshiping Devils is as much Religion as Priest-craft or Superstition; and they that write against *Priest-craft* hurt true Religion no more than they that write against *Idolatry*.

The Silversmiths of *Diana*, of *Ephesus*, and the Silversmiths of *Priest-craft* in *Rome*, and elsewhere, are equally culpable, and equally angry, when the hope of their Gain is in jeopardy.

The Graces of God's Holy Spirit supports true Religion sufficiently; but *Priest-craft* or *Superstition* (the Politick Inventions of Men) as they had their original from Men, they cannot be supported but *by Men*, crafty Men, and Men of Power and Subtlety, like *Numa Pampilius*, that first hatch'd the same, and brought it to light, under the umbrage of a Deity, or Divinity; this is *Priest-craft all over*. But *true Christianity* (on the contrary) as the Apostle says, did not come by Men, but *Holy Men spake as they were inspir'd by the Holy-Ghost*, and did convert the World, without *Sword*, or *Gun*, *Constables*, *Jaylors*, *Hangmen*, or *Dragoons*, *Proctors* or *Sumners*. A Church *they prop* must tumble down; but the *true Church of England* is as large as all the *true Christians in England*, and all the World over Catholick; and is a Noun-substantive that can stand by it self, without the assistance of the said *Black-guard*. Nay, the *Black-guard* and Gates of *Hell* (conjoin'd) shall not prevail against it.

The *Christian Magistrates hand* has often occasion'd *harm* to the Truth and Sincerity of Christian Religion: Thus the good Emperor *Constantine*'s kindness to Churchmen, in making them Rich, made them *Proud* and Contentious, and like the *French Hector*, when they get one fat Dominion or Diocess, they were never quiet 'till they got a better Bishoprick, or enlarged the *Perambulations* of what they had; from this rapacity, *Avarice* and *Pride*, grew *Contentions* and *Priest-craft*, that plagues *Christendom*, as well as *England* at this Day. One Bishop would not of old be pleased with a fat Bishoprick, but *Chagrin* and *Alamort* because not Archbishop. A Christian King or Queen has enough to do to please them all.

Cujus Avaritiæ totus non sufficit Orbis.

And

And, for this discovery and naked truth, they would plague me, had they but Wit and Learning enough, they have Malice and Revenge enough, (I do not doubt) namely *Priest-craft* all over. I read mine own Doom in *John* 16. 33. *In the World ye shall have Tribulation*: Ay, I expect it every Day; but I'll make them asham'd, and rout their *Black-guard*, for in the same Verse I am well encouraged, *Be of good chear I have overcome the World.*

Amongst other *Cavillers*, one bold and illiterate (*Black-coat* no doubt) charges me with no less Crime than *Blasphemy*, for questioning whether some of the Chapters and Verses be the Word of God, though bound up and hudled together by the Book-binder, and called the Bible, which some Mens easy credulity (nick-nam'd Faith) take to be God's Holy Word, *all in mall* (as the *Dutch* speak) in the Bulk, and *at all Adventures*, and know not wherefore; and yet count themselves very Religious (not Superstitious) in so doing, though there be never so many various Readings, Additions, Alterations, and different Copies in several Languages, as the *Septuagint*, which is usually more quoted than the *Hebrew* Text, by our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles: And the *Hebrew Text* differs vastly of old from what it is now, with the *Masoreth* Notes, added by the University of *Tiberius* 200 Years after St. *Hierome* wrote his *Latin* Translation (which I take to be the most authentick Scripture) and is now called the *Vulgar Latin*, wherein I agree with the Papists; Because St. *Hierom* had not only the Aid of the Learned *Origen* (his *Hexaples* and *Octaples*) but he himself also was a great *Hebraitian* (as *Hebrew* is now accounted, though I know there is no such (uncertain) Interpreter of the Holy Bible, as the *Hebrew* Text especially, where it differs from the *Chaldee* Paraphrase of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*, brought to light first about our blessed Saviour's Time, yet he never made use of it in his *Quotations*, nor yet his Apostles, but the *Septuagint* most *commonly*, though *not always*.

As for Example, *Mark* 2. 26. *He* (David) *went into the House of God in the days of Abiathar the Priest*; whereas in 1 *Sam.* 21. 1. It was in the Days of *Abimelech* (the Priest) אחימלך *Ahimelech* in *Hebrew*; *Abimelech*, says the *Septuagint*, which was occasion'd, I guess, by the Fault of Transcribers, for כ is put for ה which is כ turn'd on one side, by negligence of Transcribers. So *Mat.* 2. 6. Thou

Beth-

Bethlemem in the Land of *Judah art not* the leaſt, *&c.* whereas the Hebrew Text is quite contrary; and ſo is *Mic.* 5. 2. צעיר להיות *parva es*, μὴ ὀλιγοστὸς εἶ, *non parva es*, ſay ſome Books, and alſo the *Septuagint*; which St. *Matthew* follows, and not the *Hebrew*, and yet St. *Matthew*, (ſome think) writ his Goſpel originally in *Hebrew*.

So *Acts* 7. 43. *I will carry away beyond Babylon*, taken, it ſeems, by St. *Stephen*, from *Amos* 5. 27. *I will cauſe you to go into Captivity beyond* Damaſcus; which is more agreeable to the truth of the Hiſtory, than the Text in *Amos*; where, in the *Septuagint* it is ἐπέκεινα Δαμάσκου. So in the *Hebrew* מהלאה לרמשק. St. *Stephen* probably knowing it to be the Error of the Tranſcriber.

As I think is 1 *Cor.* 10. 8. there fell in one Day 23000, but it is 24000 in *Numb.* 25. 9. both in the *Septuagint* and the *Hebrew*, and the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos*; and in *Aquila*, *Symachus*, and *Theodoſian*, thoſe *Semi-Chriſtiani Judaizantes*, as St. *Hierom* calls them. So alſo in the *Vulgar Latin*, and the *Æthiopick*, *Arabick*, and *Syriac* Verſions.

I am able to give 500 Inſtances of this nature, if the Coxcombs call upon me to prove my words —— (In *page* 1. of the *Second Part* of *Prieſtcraft*) namely, *Infallibility and Immortality are Twins, that are born, and live, and die together*; *Mortals never yet attained to Infallibility, no, not the very Apoſtles themſelves*; *nor, as I ſhall prove hereafter*; *no, not the Holy Writ in ſome Paſſages, by reaſon of the various Readings, Additions, Alterations, ſeveral and different Copies, in ſeveral Idioms and Languages, and ſeveral Tranſlations*; *and by reaſon alſo of the Negligence, Careleſneſs, or Folly of the Tranſcribers, and many other Contingencies, as ſhall hereafter, againſt all Contradiction, apparently be proved.*

And had not the *Dulpates* (that know not ſo much of the *Hebrew* Language as *Balaam*'s Aſs) as good have taken my *word*, as to put me (to Inſtances) for proof.

St. *Luke*, in the Genealogy of our Saviour, mentions *Canaan* (according to the *Septuagint*) to be *one* of them: But in the *Hebrew Text* he is omitted.

So 18000 *Edomites* are ſaid to be killed in the *Valley of Salt*, in 2 *Sam.* 8. 13. and 1 *Chron.* 18. 12. but in the Title of *Pſal.* 60. it is but 12000. which I *aſcribe* to the negligence of *Tranſcribers*. The like variation, in 1 *Kings* 4. 26. compared with 2 *Chron.* 9. 25.

The

The like in 1 *Chron.* 18. 4. compared with 2 *Sam.* 8. 4. 700 in 2 *Sam.* 10. 18. is 7000 in 1 *Chron.* 19. 18. When *Joab* numbred the People of *Israel*, the Total Sum in 1 *Chron.* 21. 5. was 1100000. but 800000 in 2 *Sam.* 24. 9. a vast difference, and in *Judah* 500000 says *Samuel*, but in 1 *Chron.* 21. 5. only 470000. *Jashabeam* kill'd 300 Men at one time, 1 *Chron.* 11. 11. but he is called *Adino* 2 *Sam.* 23. 8. and is said to have Slain 800 at one time.

Jehoiakim was 8 Years Old when he began to Reign, 2 *Chron.* 36. 9. but he was then 18 Years Old, if we believe 2 *Kings* 24. 8.

The like mistake in 2 *Chron.* 22. 2. or in 2 *Kings* 8. 26. but this is the truest account of the time that King *Ahaziah* began to Reign, namely, at the age of 22 Years, for his Father King *Joram* died at his Age of 40 Years; how could his Son then be 42 Years Old when he began to Reign, as is said 2 *Chron.* 22. 2.

I could fill a Volume on this Theme, in trivial mistakes by the fault of Transcribers, but Almighty God in his Providence has prevented all material escapes, so that there is enough in Holy Writ to make the Man of God perfect, and to bring Men to Heaven.

Some *unthinking Priests* will swear upon a Bible that there is no mistake in it, and when People find they are Forsworn therein, they are the more apt to turn *Deists* or *Atheists*: Or begin to think that the Church of *England* said nothing but what was true, when she says, she *may Err*.

By the way then, it may be Impious to punish Dissenters, lest, perhaps we punish men that are more Wise and more Honest than our selves.

However, the punishment of Schismaticks, that are deserters from an errable Church, is *unaccountable Nonsence*.

There is none so bold as Blind *Byard*, and there is no greater sign of want of Wisdom and Reason, than to be as positive as any Woman, and as dogmatical as a silly Priest, they will Swear and Die for the Truth of what they say, and yet we are not able to answer the Question of *Pontius Pilate* —— *what is Truth?* we usually say, *humanum est errare, & mortale est errare*; we must be divested of Humanity and Mortality, before we attain Infallibility in every thing, either in Philosophy or Divinity, or in our very Bibles.

How-

How induſtrious are the Holy Evangeliſts to prove our Bleſſed Saviour to be the *Stem of Jeſſe*, of whom the *Meſſias*, or *Son of David* ſhould come; and he did come, according to the Fleſh, of *Solomon* the Son of *David*, ſays St. *Matthew*, but St. *Luke* ſays, he came of *Nathan* the Son of *David*.

Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by *Jeremy* the Prophet, *&c. Mat.* 27. 9. whereas *Jeremy* has no ſuch words, it is *Zachery* 11, 12, 13. by the careleſneſs of Tranſcribers, I gueſs.

Like that in *Heb.* 1. 12. as a veſture ſhalt thou *fold them up*, and they ſhall be changed ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἑλίξεις αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀλλαγήσονται whereas (fold them up) ſhould be ἀλλάξεις according to the Hebrew תַּחֲלִיפֵם that is, *Immutabis eos*; and with the *Hebrew* agrees the *Septuagint*, ὡσεὶ περιβόλαιον ἀλλάξεις αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀλλαγήσονται. As a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed; which I impute *not to the Author* of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* (whoſoever he was) but to the *Tranſcribers*.

Of which I have given many Inſtances (if not too many) I can give many more. Theſe are enough to hold the *Hands* (of the little Divines) though they were juſt ready to lay *them* upon the Bible, and to Swear upon a Book, that the Tranſcribers and Printers are Infallible.

And though we may poſſibly perſwade our Hearers to believe St. *Matthew* or St. *Luke's Goſpel*, yet how we ſhould prevail with any of them (except Children, the Green Aprons, and Fools) to believe that *Chriſt* came of *David* by his Son *Nathan* and alſo by his Son *Solomon*, there's the Difficulty. Or how we ſhould convince them, *which* may be, or is the true *Original* of the Holy Scriptures, the *Septuagint*, the *Hebrew*, or the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, or *Hieruſalem Targum*, or that of *Aquila* (who was firſt a Heathen under *Hadrian* the Emperor) and his Deputy Governour, to rebuild *Jeruſalem*, and then and there he *turn'd Jew*, and Tranſlated the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe of *Oukelos* (who was Nephew to the Emperor *Titus Veſpatian*, namely, his Siſters Son.)

Or, that of *Symachus*, who was a *Samaritan*, ſays *Epiphanius*, *Theodoret* and *Euthimius*, and miſſing Preferment (that he gap'd for in *Samaria*, he turn'd *Nazarene*) or *Chriſtian-Jew*, *Semichriſtianus* (St. *Hierom* calls him) and *Euſebius* ſays, he was an *Ebionite* (that is a *Nazarene*) and put out his Bible, or rather Tranſlation of the Bible, 56 Years after *Aquila*, in the Year 200. *Severus* then Emperour.

Or,

Or, that of *Theodosian* is preferred before the *Septuagint*, by the *Christian* Clergy (says St. *Hierom*'s Comment upon *Daniel*.)

Or, *that Bible*, or Original *Scripture* which in the Year of *Christ* 219. was found *in a Hogshead* in *Jericho*, says *Epiphanius*, *Theodoret*, and *Eusebius* in *Hist. Ecclesiastical. lib.* 6. *cap.* 17.

Or, *that Bible* found in *Nicopolis*, Anno 228.

Or, that which the great St. *Lucian* (a Hermit and Martyr) found in a Tower at *Nicomedia*, when the Bloody Emperour *Maximinus* Raged.

Or, That which *Origen* Corrected and Amended, so much Commended by St. *Hierom* (*Prefat. in Pentateuchum.*)

Or, the Edition of the *Septuagint* — which *Hesichius* Published, and was own'd by the *Christians* of *Alexandria*, and all the *Gipsey-Christians*, all over *Egypt*; Tho the Church of *Constantinople* and all *Asia* (as far as *Antioch*) allowed *rather* that of the *Martyr Lucian*; but the Church of *Hierusalem* and all the *Eastern Churches* believed *most* in that of *Origen* (*in Hexaplis suis*) another in *Origens Tetraplis*, another in his *Octaplis*.

All these differ one from another; the Council of *Trent* makes the *Apochrypha* to be as *Canonical* Scripture as the *best*, but our 39 Articles will not allow them, nor I, therefore, and only therefore.

But, if any body can give me a better reason for my Faith, I am not too Old to Learn, nor so Old as to Doat so far as Common-Coxcombs generally do in Believing without any ground or reason,

They do Believe (they say) but that's a Lye,
For none Believe but they that do know why.

A pretty Catechism! *Why* do you believe the Holy Scriptures? *Answ.* because the Church has *Canoniz'd Genesis, Exodus*, &c. *Matthew, Mark*, &c.

How do you know but the Church *may Mistake* some of the said *Originals*, and Recommend to us one that is *not the best* and Right? *Answ.* Because the *Church cannot Err, but is Infallible.*

But *that's a Lye*, if you believe the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, in the 39 *Articles*; if you will take the Churches Word for it, they assure you they *may Err*, as well as *Rome*, or the Churches of *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, &c.

The first time that the Devil appear'd to a King, he took the Shape and Habit of an Archbishop, or Archpriest (call him as you please) High-Priest or Chief-Priest, an Old Man (*Samuel*) wrapped in a Cassock or Mantle. 1. *Sam.* 28. 14.

All the Witches on Earth, and all the Devils in Hell, could not with all their Magick, Spells, Incantations or Charms, fetch the *true Samuel* out of Heaven.

For, St. *Luke* says, there is a great *Gulph set*, (*Luke* 16. 26.) There is no Road leading from Heaven to Hell.

But, in truth, when Wicked King *Saul* perceived that *God had forsaken him, and answer'd him not, neither by Dreams, nor by Urim,* (*the Priest*) nor *yet by Prophets*, 1 *Sam.* 28. 6. Then, he goes to the Devil and a Witch (at *Endor*) and her Imps, or Familiar Spirits; saying, much like him (in the Poem)

Flectere si nequeam Superos Acheronta movebo.

If Heaven *my Enterprize will not allow,*
I'll try what Hell and Devils (*then*) *can do.*

which shows the true *Practice of Wicked Men* (like *Saul* that had the Devil in him) or *diveliſh Priest-craft*, when they cannot support their Cause by *God and Holy Scripture*, they make *Lyes their Refuge*, and the *Father of Lies*.

And what's all *this Pother for*? and wherewith the World is Plagu'd? but only to give the Pope, his Monks, his Jesuits, and Priests of several sorts, the *Ascendent* and *Supremacy* over Kings, Queens, Princes, Noblemen, Gentlemen, and all the Laiety; and all this ado is but to get them *Dominion* and *Mony*, the Result of the *Avarice and Ambition* of Priest-craft, and in all or most Sects and Schemes of Religion.

But how is it possible to bring this to pass? How is it possible to make the Giant *Sampson* Grind? How?

Put out his Eyes and you may lead him by the Nose; This is the very Policy of *Hell* and *Rome*, Ignorance is the Mother of Priest-craft Devotion, and gives it *Birth* and *Breeding*.

As *Mes Andrew Cant* Preach'd at *Aberdeen* in *Scotland* (I heard him) *deny your Reason and your Senses*, and believe in the good Covenant, and *give the Cause a Life*,

Or,

Or, as the Popish *Shaveling Priests* say, deny *your Reason and your Senses*, and believe that we can make as many Gods as we have Wafers (if we list) and turn them to Flesh and Blood and Bones; And if ye do not believe all this, ye must *Burn in Smithfield* if ever we get a *Popish Prince*.

And all the *Priest-craft Whimseys* now in Vogue (mentioned in my Character of Priest-craft) *Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, you must believe*, or else the Bigots (if their Power was but equal to their Malice) would send you to the Devil and the Goal.

Behold their Black-Guards —— there they come —— *Summers, Proctors, Registers, Surrogates, Bumbailifs, Hang-Men, and Taylors* —— Touch not *the Churches Pillars* and *Supporters* at your Peril.

At least, if these Pillars happen to be *as strong in Power and Domineering* as I have known them in *my Time*, when the *Star-Chamber, Cropping of Ears, Pillorying, Jayling, Scandal Magnat. Excessive Fines*, and *High-Commission Court*, and little *Laud* and his Chaplains, *Manwaring, Sibthorp*, and *Mountague* were Rampant and in Vogue; till the poor *Oppressed* People *run Mad in* 41, 42, in *England, Scotland*, and *Ireland*.

Oh little *Laud!* and his *Lambeth Canons*: I cannot forget him and them; but I have (I thank Almighty God) *Survey'd* all their Malice; let them now fear me; I have suffer'd *enough* and have been Vext with them long enough in all Conscience; now, for *Reprisals*, when I get a *Letter of Mart*.

But (what I like better) had not we better agree, shake Hands and be Friends? I never gave the Honest and Wise Men any offence either in Word or Writing; except it be an offence to Interpret the Proverbs right in my History of *Whigism*. By me, that is, by Wisdom, or if you will, and which is all one) By God Kings Reign, and by God *Usurpers*, and *Phocus's*, and *Cromwells*, and *Protectors*, and *Priest-craft Bishops* sway *permissione Divina*, by *the Permission of Heaven*.

Good Kings Reign by *the Grace of God*, Bad Kings, and *Devils*, and *Devilish Men*, and *Devilish Priest-craft* and *Popes* Reigns sometimes (God knows) *permissione Divina*.

All the Kingdoms of the Earth are mine (says the Devil and the Pope and the Jesuits) and we *give them to whomsoever we will* ——

Then —— God Help us.

For *there is no Power but of God* (*Nero* was *then* Emperour) *Rom.* 13. 1. *The Powers that be are ordain'd of God.*

Or, *by God*, good Kings and Villains *Reign*; the *former* by his *Grace*, the *latter* by his *Permission*, as I said before. If *Kings* can be content to be *good*, and keep their *Coronation Oaths*; there never could be any room for *Rebellion* or *Usurpers*.

If *Priests* would be content to serve God more than their own vile ends of *Domineering* and *Avarice*, there *never* could be any Room for *Priest-craft*.

But when nothing will serve them but to *get up and Ride*, the Spurgall'd Laiety, having first *blinded them* (as they do Horses in a Mill) to make them *Slave it quietly*; There's the *Devil* and *Priest-craft*, or *Lucifer* and *Antichrist*, they love to enslave the Laity and Pick their Pockets for God's Sake, but cannot endure to be told of it; the silly *Bigots* (*like Balaam's Ass*,) love to carry the false Prophet, and quietly jog on, 'till they hap to be beaten, the Ass *says not one word*, never open's his Mouth: *Am not I thine Ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine, unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee?* (*Numb.* 22. 30.) And he say'd —— Nay; or, no, no, Sobersides, no.

And I say, no, too; Will I ever give you *a Third part of the Character* of Priest-craft? I say, no, no, Jog on, you Ass, you and the False Prophet together.

Let *Priests* and *People* cease to think that every *Reading-Don* pleases God, because perhaps he babbles in the Pulpit an Hour or two, sometimes Sense, sometimes Nonsense, as it happens, according to the Author, whence he stole his *Notes*, and then most impudently vends, to the silly Laiety his *stolen Goods*; and calls them his own, his *own Sermons*; when they are no more of his making, than the *Ballads* or *News* are made by the *Hawkers* that cry them about the Streets to get the Pence.

With this difference tho', that the *Sermon-monger* struts and *magnifies himself* as the Author of the Wares he vends (which not one of a thousand are;) whereas the honest *Hawker* more modestly lays no *false Claim* to the honour of being the *Ballad-maker*, or *Sermon-maker*, but only courts your Pocket, *Quid pro Quo*, give me the *Pence* and take my *Ballad*, my *Sermon*, my *News*.

But will some say, *How now*? This is the strangest and the most unheard of Account of a *Sermon-monger* that ever was made;

and

and the *Pulpit-prater*, (that has his Religion in his *Tongue* and *Eyes*, I mean, his *Sermon-Notes*:) And the Women, the *good Women* (that have their Religion in their *Ears*) know not how to bear all this: What? Have they not cause to roar (like *Mears*) when their Gods are taken away, and their Priest likewise? Poor and undone Bigots! They think I am in Jest, and Banter with them, but I never was more serious, solemn, and grave in all my Life.

If when I would perswade them I should turn up my Eyes 'till the black Pupil be lost under the upper Eye-lid, and nothing but the *pious Goggle* and *innocent white* appears, (*that's a precious Man*, say the Women) and hold up my Hands to Heaven, making Faces and Grimaces, with a Cant like a Gypsie, a whine like a beaten Spaniel, and a groan like a dying Man. In this Oratory not a *Holderforth* but can outmatch me; consequently the Bigots will never be undeceiv'd, until they come to Judgment; and then it is too late to hear that terrible Note, *Isai.* 1. 12, 13, 14, 15. *When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an abomination unto me, the New-Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with, it is Iniquity, even the solemn Meeting; your New-Moons and your appointed Feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many Prayers I will not hear.*

But *keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine Heart,* (much less thy Tongue) *blutter any thing before God. For God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy words be few.*

Men and Women talk of Scripture, *Scripture* and the *Revelations*, but *plain Scripture* who regards? This is a plain Scripture, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*; whereas my Charity is *not too strait lac'd*, if I say (witness their own Consciences) that a great part (Men and Women) go more to *see and be seen*, in Body, than mend their Souls; not one of a thousand that go to Church, examine when they come home, Have I got a *jot* by this bustle? *Let thy words be few*, says the Holy Writ; but if *Christ* and his Apostles were alive, and shou'd only say the Lord's-Prayer in the

Pulpit

Pulpit, or preach a Sermon there no longer than those they made when they were here upon Earth, the Bigots or Proselites of *Priest-craft* (which are the generality, Rich and Poor) now adays, would *kick* them out of the Church, or at least *hiss* them out.

Let them (*to save the Affront*) quote Scripture, and the Lord's Prayer — *pish* — they heed no Scripture that thwarts their *Priestcraft* and *Hypocrisy*, and *Pharisaical Devotion*. Whereas if we teach (as our Saviour did) the Whole Duty of Man, *in doing as we would be done unto*, and saying the *Lord's Prayer*, or the like, *Pish, pish*, say they, give us Sermons, Sermons; of which notwithstanding, at the Years end, they remember not one word; nor did ever one word to the purpose penetrate further than the *Ear*, in the *Drum* thereof, the *Cant*, the *Noise*, the *Whine*, the *Groan*. Ah—ah. The truth of all is, in short, *Priestcraft* has *stifled* the *whole face* of true Religion and *Christ's* Church.

That's bad enough in all Conscience, but that's not all; for the Generality mind nothing but *Priest craft*, the Priests and the Bigots are agreed, as in the Prophet of old, *The Prophets prophecy falsly, and the Priests bear rule by their means, and the People love to have it so; but what will you do in the end thereof?*

True Religion is not only the best, but the easiest thing in the World, if our Saviour's Instructions might take place, to get us Life eternal.

Life eternal? what's that? It is this, and this only, *John* 17. This is *Life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.*

But, who can know God that is infinite? Can a Peck contain all the Water in the Sea? I answer, Yes; it may, much easier than a *finite Being* (as Man is) to comprehend an *Infinite Being* (as God is); or a *finite Being* (as the Sun is) further than they are pleased to impart themselves. We know nothing of the nature of the Sun, but by the Light it imparts.

We know nothing of the Nature of God, but by the Light He imparts in his Word, in his Works, in his Name. *Moses* knew nothing of God, till God told him his *Name*: And I am of *Levinus Lemnius* his Opinion, who says he knew more Divinity by Meditating and Compiling his Book, *De nomine Dei & attributis divinis*, than by all other Tracts of Divinity he ever read.

And it was a most material *Order* that *Moses* made to God, when He sent him into *Egypt* of his Errand, *Exod.* 3. 13. *Behold,*

when

when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you, and they *shall say unto me, What is his Name? What shall I say unto them?* And God said unto *Moses, I am that I am*: or, as the *Hebrew* more significantly, אהיה אשר אהיה: *sum qui sum, ὁ ὤν ὁ τῶ ϰῦ ὁ ἐχόμενος ὁ ὢν sum. Ehid misit me ad vos. I am* hath sent me unto you.

The *Tetragramaton* יהוה *Jehovah*, or *primum & summum ens* hath sent me unto you.

The noblest Conception that Man can possibly have of God, is, that he *is*; nothing in the World *is ὁ ὢν ens*, but God alone. All other things are changeable, unstable, here to Day, gone to Morrow. This Meditation alone cures Hypocrisy, Priestcraft, Avarice, Ambition, Cruelty, Revenge, Injustice, and all Impiety. For, what will it profit a Man to gain the whole World; (a fickle, unstable, uncertain, momentary World) with the loss of all Interest *in him*, that alone *is, was*, and *is to come*.

Therefore Almighty God has but one (only) proper Name, *Jehovah*. His many other Names in Scripture, as אלוה *Eloah*, אלהים *Elohim* are the common Names of God, communicable to Magistrates, Judges, Angels, *&c.* called *Dii* and *Divi*, even by *Jehovah* himself. But those *Dii* shall perish, *Jehovah* only is eternally unchangeable, *They all shall perish will wax old as doth a Garment, but thou art the same* (says Holy *David*) and *thy Years shall not fail.*

Worship him alone therefore כל אלהים all ye *Elohims* or Angels, *Psal.* 97. 7. *Worship him all ye Gods* (Angels) in Heaven, and Kings, Princes, and Magistrates on Earth. And what Worship is that, both in Heaven and Earth?

Not *Priestcraft* and *Superstition*, not grunting and groaning, and looking surly, and sighing: No such Notes are in the Heavenly Chorus and Quire; but rejoycing evermore, and again, *I say rejoicing*, (not ranting) but with a serene and quiet Mind contemplating this inexpressible ὁ ὤν, or *Ens*, or *Being* glorious in his Holiness, his *Name*, his *Attributes*, and his *Works*, and living justly, charitably, and chearfully amongst Men. This is the Summ total of true Religion; the face whereof is quite defac'd all Christendom over.

I am one of the oldest Men *alive*, and have had as opportune Advantages to *make* and *take* Observations (of the rise and full

of

of Spiritual and Temporal Affairs) *as any Man alive*, and am bleſt with *one of the happieſt Memories* of any Man alive; (as is well known to them that know me well.) And, yet, in Matters of Religion I could ſcarce diſcern one *Jot* or *Iota* of it, it is obſcur'd ſo by *Prieſtcraft* or *Superſtition*; in ſeveral Dreſſes, (tho') and variety of Diſguiſes.

In my Infancy, *Popiſh-like* and nonſenſical *Ceremonies* juſtled true Devotion out of the Church; and the Cruelty of Churchmen in Power, aſſiſted with *Bumbailiffs*, *Pillories*, *Hangmen*, the *High Commiſſion-Court*, burning in the Cheek and *cropping of Ears*, &c. made *Engliſhmen* very uneaſy.

Until the ſucceeding Fanaticiſm ſet up a *Prieſtcraft* in another Dreſs, ten times worſe than the former; the Remedy prov'd worſe than the Diſeaſe, and under colour of Goſpel-days and Goſpel-light, the greateſt Villanies, and Villanies acted upon the Stage (in Church and State) that the Sun ever ſaw, or the Earth groan'd under.

Oh bleſſed Reformation! Then the Pulpit juſtled out the Popiſh-like *adored* Altars, and together *with them* (for haſte and zeal) *all true Religion* out of the Church: In ſhort, *Hugh Peters* and the *Pulpiteers* of his Gang were ſainted, honoured, and adored, whilſt little *Laud* (like little St. *Paul*) had his Head chop'd off by bloody *Nero*'s. Then ſucceeded *Prophaneneſs* (even in the Church) cold Formality, and Altar-Worſhip and Pulpit-Worſhip went hand in hand, and very good Friends.

And happy was he that could be *free* of the Pulpit, by vertue of a *Ten Shillings Licenſe* (from a Biſhop) to Preach; not a Farthing abated, beſides *Offam Cerbero* for Expedition or ſo, (uſually twice as much) which goes hard in Hard-times; and now that the Bank of *England* is fallen ſix *per Cent.*

But, thus qualified, and by vertue of Gown and Caſſock, upſtarts a little *Domine Doctor*, and ſcrambles up to the admired Pulpit, with his Paper-Book, proportionably full of Sermon-Notes, as his Leiſure and Purſe can afford.

A Score of Groats in his Pocket will produce a Score of Sermons at a Bookſeller's Stall, for which he gets (if he be a *Lecturer*) many a good *Curteſy* from the *good Women*, and at leaſt, a *ſcore of Pounds*. And whatever becomes of the Queen's Taxes, the *Lecturer's Collectors* muſt be paid Quarterly; What Patience can bind

bind the Priest's Hands from *Fighting*, or his Tongue from *Railing* upon the wicked one that cries down the *Market-Day* and the *Market* of these *Silversmiths*; no wonder at the uproar (of them and their Bigots) when the hopes of their Gain is in Jeopardy, and the Craft by which they get their Wealth: And the *frontal Devotion* of their Bigots on *Sundays* compounds for their Cheating and Lying on *Mondays*, going to Plays and worse Houses on *Tuesdays*, Swearing, Cursing, and Damning on *Wednesdays*, Drunkenness and Gluttony on *Thursdays*, and all manner of Debaucheries on *Good Fridays*, and going to Market on *Saturdays*, for which they pray God to forgive them on *Sundays*. And when the Prayers and Sermon is done (for which happy Minute, both the Priest and the People joyfully watch the Clock and the Hour-Glass;) and no School-boys (*at a Remedy*) crowd and throng more eagerly to get out of School, than the Bigots out of Church: All Parties very well pleas'd, the Priest as shillingly Merry as a School-boy when he has read his Lesson, or done his Task, with the merry Thought of *Twenty Shillings* for the good Hours Work.

And the *Auditory* as glad that Conscience is thus *hush't*, and laid to sleep in quiet, for *one Week* at least, whilst the *Organ* adds Melody to their Mirth, and plays them a Jigg, as they go crowding away.

Oh! happy Gospel-Days of Light, Hypocrisy, and Priestcraft! When we read that Almighty God is angry or pleas'd, frowns, or is appeas'd, laden with Sins as a Cart with Sheaves, or repents. This is not to be understood literally (I hope) all that are in their Wits will grant. As being spoken *κατ' ἀνθρωπους, non ad rationem captum accommodate*, fitted to our silly Capacities.

God is said to hold the Sea in the hollow of his *hand*, and to weigh the Mountains in *Scales*, and the Hills in a *Ballance*, which is not (one word) literally true; for God neither has, nor needs either *Scales* or *Weights*, nor *Hand* to ballance them.

And some think that God's making the World in Six Days, and resting the Seventh Day, cannot possibly be literally true; or that he was 24 Hours in saying, *Let there be light, and there was light* —— when there could be neither Day, or Hour, or Minute, till the Heavens were made, and Lights set up therein.

I am so far therefore from thinking my self an able Divine, that the more I read the Scripture, and consider it stedfastly, the more I am ashamed, and out of Conceit with my self.

I cannot reconcile one Scripture with another, no not by the aid of *Lightfoot*'s Harmony, *Hammond* or *Grotius*.

Let them that can teach me to make the Scriptures agree together; as for example, in a few amongst many Instances.

Tell me (*you that can*) how does *Acts* 7. 16. agree with *Gen.* 23. 18, 19, 20. and *Gen.* 49. 29, 30, 31, 32.

St. *Stephen* (or St. *Luke*) tells us, That *Jacob* died in *Egypt*, and was carried over into *Sichem*, and laid in the Sepulcher that *Abraham* bought for a Summ of Money of the Sons of *Emmor* the Father of *Sichem*: Which is a *Mistake*, because *Jacob* (as he ordered and commanded his Son *Joseph*) was buried with his Grandmother *Sarah*, and his Grandfather *Abraham*, in the Cave of *Machpelah*, in the Field of *Ephron* the *Hittite*, before *Mamre*, alias *Hebron*, *Gen.* 25. 9, 10. and not at *Sichem*, as St. *Stephen* or St. *Luke* affirm; led (I suppose) into the Mistake, by what they might read in *Gen.* 33. 18, 19, 20. where *Jacob* (not *Abraham*) bought a Field in *Shalem* (a City of *Shechem*) of *Hamor* (not *Ephron*) *not for a burial-place*, but to set an Altar there.

In 2 *Chron.* 13. 2. the Mother of *Abijah* is *Michaiah* the Daughter of *Uriel* of *Gibeah*; as if the Author's Memory failed him, or through some other contingency; for but two Chapters before, 2 *Chron.* 11. 20, 21, 22. we are told that *Rehoboam*, the Father of *Abijah*, took *Maachah* (the Daughter of *Absalom*, his Uncle) to Wife, and she bore him a Son, which he loved more, than any of his Sons; and the Daughter of *Absalom* above all his other seventeen Wives, and sixty Misses or Concubines, though they bore unto him twenty eight Sons and sixty Daughters.

But how shall we reconcile these with 1 *Kings* 15. 2. where one *English* Bible says, that *Abijah*'s Mother's Name was *Maachah*, the Daughter of *Abishalom*; but the *Septuagint* differs from all of them, calling her the Daughter of *Uriel*, Μαάχα θυγατηρ Ουριηλ.

Let the little Levites (that pretend such skill in resolving Scripture-Riddles, and think I speak *rashly* or by guess, or at random) Reconcile 2 *Chron.* 22. 9. with 2 *Kings* 9. 27. ——

And

And 2 *Chron.* 28. 20, 21. where the King of *Assyria*, *Tilgath Pileser*, took a Bribe or Mony, (which King *Ahaz* took out of (I will not say Rob'd) *the House of the Lord*, and when he had got the Mony, he *would not help* him.

But the Book of *Kings* says he *did help him*, 2 *Kings* 16. 7, 8, 9. *Moses* tells us (*Deut.* 18. 6.) that *Aaron* died at *Mosera*, whereas he tells us before (in *Num.* 33. 38.) that *Aaron* Died at *Mount Hor*, which was Eight Days Journey from *Moseroth*, as appears by the *Journals*, *Numb.* 33. 30. 37.

There was Peace betwixt the King of *Israel*, *Baasha*, and *Asa* King of *Judah*, until the 35 Year of *Asa*'s Reign, 2 *Chron.* 15. 19. but 2 *Chron.* 16. 1. the War broke out betwixt them; and not before. Yet 1 *Kings* 15. 16. says —— There was War between *Asa* and *Baasha* all their Days.

Again, How is it possible to be true, that the War did break out in 36 Years of *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* 16. 1. whereas King *Baasha* began but to Reign in the third Year of *Asa*, 15. 28. and his Son *Elah* succeeded him in the 26 Year of King *Asa*, so that King *Baasha* began to fight King *Asa* Nine years after he was Dead.

And let them reconcile 1 *Kings* 22. 43. with 2 *Chron.* 17. 6.

And reconcile *Jer.* 52. 20. with 1 *Kings* 7. 25.

St. *Paul* tells us (in his *Sermon*) Acts 13. 18, 20, 21. that from the time of the Children of *Israel*'s coming out of *Egypt*, they *March'd* and *Countermarch'd* in the Wilderness 40 Years, then had *Judges* 450 Years, and King *Saul* Reign'd 40 Years, and *David* Reign'd 40 Years, 2 *Sam.* 5. 4. In all, before *Solomon* built the Temple 570 Years, and 574 Years (namely, the 4th Year of King *Solomon*'s Reign) The Temple began to be built 1 *Kings* 6. 1. where I also read that *Solomon* began to build the Temple in the 480th Year after the Children of *Israel*'s descent from *Egypt*, which is but 94 Years mistaken.

The Prophet *Isaiah* 7. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. is sent by Almighty God to Prophecy Comfort to King *Ahaz* against *Pekah*, *Remaliah*'s Son, and King of *Israel*, within 65 Years, cold Comfort, if there be no mistake; therefore I think this 65 Years should be 6 Years, for about that time *Israel* or *Ephraim* were carried Captive. 2 *Kings* 17. 6. the Transcriber putting חמשים for ששים *Sexaginta* for *Sex & Quinq.* Six and Five, that is Eleven Years; this is but my guess, for the Hebrew is בתוך שנים וששים שנה יחתת *Intra* 65 *Annos confringetur*;

and so is the *Chaldee* Paraphrase agreeing with our *English* Bible, or Translation.

Matth. 2. 15. *Out of Egypt have I call'd my Son*, alluding to the Prophecy concerning *Israel*'s coming out of *Egypt*, *Hos.* 11. 1. ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου as some Translations, (ours amongst the rest) so is the Hebrew קָרָאתִי לִבְנִי. but the *Septuagint* Interprets that Text τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ his Sons; which makes me believe that St. *Matthew*'s Gospel was writ in Hebrew Originally, at least, he follow'd the *Hebrew Text*, whereas in Quotations of *Christ* and his Apostles, the *Septuagint* is usually followed, but not always.

But I am Tir'd; when the little Levites have unty'd these Knots, I have tentimes more to busy their little Brains; tho' the Cathedral and Reading Dons of the Pulpit rally and help them, here's *Nuts* enough to employ their *Teeth* better than to *Gnash their Teeth* at me; but, I fear, I have set them *all a Task* beyond their skill, before they *crack them* they will *break their Brains*.

Dente meos Cessas mordaci (stulte) labores
Rodere — sed rerum discere forte Tuum.

To Knaw my Writings with your Teeth — *forbear*,
Are *Pulpit Dons* afraid the Truth *to hear*?
Lest spoil'd their *Priestcraft Market* be, *they fear*.

In short, the first compilers of the Bible were Divinely Inspir'd, but that the Transcribers were also Divinely Inspired, as they are handed down to us, who can believe? except such who can believe *Contradictions*; *which* cannot *both* be true; It is Impossible.

Nor, had I now given these Instances thereof, but that the little *Cavillers* condemn me most *unjustly*, for saying, that — Mortals never yet attain'd to Infallibility; no, not the very Apostles, nor, (as I shall prove hereafter) no, not the *Holy Writ* in some Passages, by reason of the various Reading, Additions, Alterations, and different Copies, in several Idioms and Languages, and several Translations, and many other Contingencies; and yet sufficiently true and evident in all material Points

'Points, to direct us in our way to Heaven; namely, that which 'alone makes us Men (their *Reason*) which alone distinguishes 'Men from *Brutes*, and therefore must be *the best Touchstone* that 'Mortals can attain, to know *True* Coin from *Adulterate* and falsly 'Forged; but this *Touchstone* is sometimes *Fallible* when not aided 'by the Infallible *Holy Ghost*.

By the *Instances* and proofs and *Reasons* aforesaid, the *Illiterate and unthinking, as well as the learned Clergy and Silly Laiety* will now be *of my Faith*, and must say (instead of Railing at me for Blasphemy) *as I did*, that Infallibility is not to be found in this vile World, no, not in our very Bibles, our Adored Pulpits, nor in *Churches* (High-Church nor Low-Church, Episcopal, Popish, Independant, or Presbyterian *Scotch*, *English*, *Dutch* or *Romish*, if we believe our own Eyes, or our own Bibles, and the 39 Articles, all Errable, I will not except *Rome* its self. There needs no further *Vindication* of the *Characters of Priest-craft*, every Man that reads it, is my Proselyte.

How *unaccountable then* are the Jars, the Wars, the Bloody Inquisitions, the Contentions, the Brawlings, the Disputes, and the Books about Religion, to them that has Read this little Book? and my former *Character of Priest-craft*?

They Fight and Rail and Curse and Damn, and send one another to the Devil and the Goal, to Vindicate their own Infallible Opinions in Religion, and not one of them are Infallibly True; you must take the Priest's Word for it (*that's all*) and *one* of them says one thing, and *another* another, God help the Poor Laiety the while.

The best of the Priests in Controvertial-Points are but good guessers. And these Controvertial-Points, are but *Lana Caprina*, Goat's-Wool, not a jot material to Salvation, whether true or false, and *Hittee missee*, happy go lucky, as the blind Man kill'd the Crow; and therefore very probable it is, that the Priests themselves do not believe one word which they would have you believe.

But all things necessary for our Christian Faith, Hope, and Charity, and to bring us to Heaven, are set down in Scripture (incorruptible or uncorrupted, I guess) and as plain as a Pike-staff.

The

Can any Flesh alive be so senseless as to imagine, that the *Holy God* (who has said — *The Curse that is causeless shall not come*,) will break his Word, in complacence to a *sneaking Register* or Mr. *Necessity* (the *Surrogate*,) when perhaps the Anathematized Sinner will *not pay the Knave a Groat*; or knows not how to believe that *Contradictions* and *Nonsense*, are *true* and *good sense*, tho' the Bookbinder has bound them up in the Bible.

Oh! the Block-head World we live in!

But I have done — for —

Mens Follies *never yet were* shown
Alone, without the Author's own
Folly (*I mean*) *in making known.*
How silly this vile World is grown,
For Wisdom cries — let them alone,
(Too late) *their Folly they'll* bemoan,
When the Priest-craft Charms are done;
And then this Character *they'll own,*
And smile on me, though now they frown.

Nemo vir magnus sine afflata divino.

(*None ever had* great *worth, greater sence,* and one
But by some Heavenly *Influence.*

FINIS.